



City Council Guide

www.durhamnc.gov

2013 - 2014

City Council is the legislative and policy-making body for Durham and is the final authority on City matters. The Council establishes general City policies; appointing the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk and members of boards, committees and commissions; enacting ordinances, resolutions and orders; approving the annual budget; and authorizing contracts on the City's behalf.

Council Composition

Durham has a council-manager form of government. City Council has seven members: three from specific wards, three at-large and the Mayor. Terms are staggered, with nonpartisan elections every two years.

Work Sessions

City Council holds a work session every first and third Thursday each month prior to its regular business meeting to receive information briefings and presentations. Work sessions are held at 1 p.m. in the Council's Committee Room on the second floor of City Hall, 101 City Hall Plaza. At the work session, Council discusses departmental items on the agenda and asks questions of City staff relating to agenda items.

Citizens may also address City Council at work sessions to express a matter of interest or concern. For guidelines, see "Citizen Participation – Citizen Matters."

Regular Business Meetings

City Council holds regular meetings on the first and third Monday of every month except July at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 101 City Hall Plaza. The meetings are open to the public and can be viewed live on DTN (Time Warner Cable channel 8). Meetings are also streamed live and on demand on the City's website, www.durhamnc.gov.

Citizen Matters

Residents may address City Council about matters of concern at the work session. "Citizen Matters" are heard beginning at 1 p.m.

Residents wishing to address the City Council at the work session must submit a written request to the agenda coordinator 10 calendar days prior to the work session at which they wish to speak. This gives City staff adequate time to review the resident's concern and to give a response to the resident when he or she appears before Council.

Should a Council member wish to allow a resident who has not submitted a written request to speak, a two-thirds majority vote of the Council is required to suspend the rules of procedure.

To address Council at a work session, complete the request available online and in the City Manager's Office on the second floor of City Hall, 101 City Hall Plaza. Requests can also be faxed to (919) 560-4949, or mailed to: Agenda Coordinator, City Manager's Office, 101 City Hall Plaza, Durham, NC 27701.

Public hearings are held by the City Council to give residents the opportunity to comment on current issues involving the city. Public hearings are advertised and placed on the Council's agenda to receive comment.

To make comments at a public hearing, citizens may sign up in advance of the meeting by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (919) 560-4166. Residents can also sign



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up at the time of the Council meeting by using the “Speaker’s List” card located at the City Clerk’s desk in the Council Chambers.

Citizen Boards, Committees and Commissions

City Council appoints residents to serve on 25 boards, committees and commissions that address varied aspects of Durham’s quality of life – from open spaces and trails to historic preservation, to workforce development.

Residents interested in serving on a board can get an application online or from the City Clerk’s Office on the second floor of City Hall. Applications are active at the time of the vacancy only. For information, call the City Clerk’s Office at (919) 560-4166.

Voting and the Ward System

The residency ward system of selecting City Council members provides representation from different areas of the city. The concept means the Council candidate must live in the ward he or she seeks to represent. The candidate is, however, elected by all city voters. Wards do not affect where a resident votes or which candidate(s) a resident can vote for.

To vote, a resident must be registered 30 days before an election. Residents may register to vote at the Durham County Board of Elections Office, 706 W. Corporation St. Applications may also be obtained at any public library and the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles. After registering, applicants will receive a card from the Board of Elections providing precinct and polling place locations. For information, call (919) 560-0700.

Be Informed – Watch DTN

CityLife

“CityLife” is a talk show produced by the City’s Office of Public Affairs that highlights Durham City government services, issues and upcoming events.

City Hall This Week

“City Hall This Week” is a news program about government matters, services and events that affect your life every day.

Both shows air on DTN (Time Warner Cable channel 8) and on demand on the City’s website. Look for DTN also on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

City Manager’s Report

Getting the latest news and information from the City is as easy as opening your email. The *City Manager’s Report* from City Manager Thomas J. Bonfield highlights the latest happenings in Durham City government. Signup on the City’s website to receive this weekly permission-based newsletter.



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